
Dr. Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are concerned about the Department of Defense's efforts to protect Americans employed by government contractors in Iraq from violent crime and to ensure the needs of victims are met. DoD employees who commit crimes are accountable for those crimes under U.S. law.

American citizen Jamie Leigh Jones, while employed in Baghdad by KBR, a former subsidiary of Halliburton, alleged that she was assaulted and gang raped by fellow employees. Afterwards, Army doctors performed a medical examination on Ms. Jones.

However, the results of the rape kit were turned over to KBR, Ms. Jones' employer. Portions of the rape kit are now missing. According to Ms. Jones, she was then held captive under armed guard for 24 hours without food or water. State Department agents in the US Embassy at Baghdad facilitated Ms. Jones' release.

In another case, American citizen Tracy Barker, while employed by KBR, alleged that she was sexually assaulted by a State Department employee. Her alleged assaulter continues to work for the State Department today.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. Many other women have reported sexual assault and harassment while working for government contractors. Ms. Jones and Ms. Baker's harrowing experiences prompt us to pose questions regarding the DoD's overall efforts to address crimes against individuals in similar situations.

Prevention and Assistance

How does the DOD assist American civilians living and working in Iraq who are victims of crime? Does the DoD include language in contracts requiring contractors to ensure their employees live and work in non-hostile/non-violent environments? Does the DoD provide government contracted employees with sexual assault and sexual harassment training? If so, how and when is this training implemented? Does the DoD provide such employees – American citizens – with information regarding their rights as crime victims? Does the DOD have available resources for dealing with the aftermath of victimization?

Investigations

What is the DoD's protocol on rape and sexual assault investigations of government contract employees abroad? Does the DoD send information regarding allegations of sexual assault to the Department of Justice for possible criminal investigations? Who provides the forensic examinations and what is the protocol to ensure that the exams and evidence are appropriately maintained and a chain of custody is in place?

Accountability

What types of control and enforcement power does the DoD have over civilian contracting companies when their employees commit violent crimes? What is the procedure for receiving complaints from American civilian contractors? If a complaint is received, what repercussions exist, including contractual repercussions, for the contracting company? Have there been any contractual repercussions for KBR following Ms. Jones' accusations? What was the rationale of the Army Doctor that turned Ms. Jones' rape kit to KBR? Who is responsible for receiving rape kits turned over by Army doctors? After receiving a rape kit, who safeguards it and ensures that the chain of custody is not tampered?

Offenders

What policies exist for addressing American civilian contractors, who are alleged or accused of committing crimes while in Iraq? What safety mechanisms are put in place after a report of sexual assault to ensure the safety of the victim and other potential victims? Are the alleged offenders removed from their position? Are contractors required to terminate the employment of alleged offenders of violent crime during investigations?

Reporting

Does the DoD collect data on the number of reported cases of sexual assault and other violent crimes among American civilian contractors or government contracted employees? If so, how is that data collected and where is that data published?

Victims of crime perpetrated by employees of taxpayer funded government contracts in Iraq deserve the same standard of treatment they have a right to at home. We hope the DoD is working to prevent crime, protect victims, and hold contract employees accountable. Thank you for your consideration. Because of the urgent nature of this matter, we request a response by February XX, 2008.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Ted Poe
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Madam Secretary,

We are concerned about the State Department's efforts to protect Americans employed by government contractors in Iraq from violent crime and to ensure the needs of victims are met. We believe the State Department should play a role particularly when such crimes occur within the State Department's territory.

American citizen Jamie Leigh Jones, while employed in Baghdad by KBR, a former subsidiary of Halliburton, alleged that she was assaulted and gang raped by fellow employees. Afterwards, Army doctors performed a medical examination on Ms. Jones. However, the results of the rape kit were turned over to KBR, Ms. Jones' employer. Portions of the rape kit are now missing. According to Ms. Jones, she was then held captive under armed guard for 24 hours without food or water. State Department agents in the US Embassy at Baghdad facilitated Ms. Jones' release.

In another case, American citizen Tracy Barker, while employed by KBR, alleged she was sexually assaulted by a State Department employee. Her alleged assaulter continues to work for the State Department today.

Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. Many other women have reported sexual assault and harassment while working for government contractors. Ms. Jones and Ms. Baker's harrowing experiences prompt us to pose questions regarding the State Department's overall efforts to address crimes against individuals in similar situations.

Prevention and Assistance

How does the State Department assist Americans living and working in Iraq that are victims of crime? What efforts has the State Department undertaken to ensure that Americans employed by government contractors are living and working in non-hostile/non-violent environments? Has the State Department provided government contracted employees with sexual assault and sexual harassment training? If so, when is this training provided and what personnel provide that training? Has the State Department provided such employees – American citizens – with information regarding their rights as crime victims and available resources for dealing with the aftermath of victimization?

Investigations

What is the State Department's protocol on rape and sexual assault investigations abroad? Does the Department send information regarding allegations of sexual assault and other violent crimes to the Department of Justice for possible criminal investigations? Who is responsible for conducting sexual assault forensic examinations on victims? What is the protocol to ensure that the exams and evidence are appropriately maintained and a chain of custody is in place?

Offenders

What is the State Department's policy for addressing American civilian contractors who are accused of committing crimes? What safety mechanisms are put in place after a report of sexual assault to ensure the safety of the victim and other potential victims?

What is the policy for removing alleged offenders from their position following an allegation?

Reporting

Does the State Department collect data on the number of reported cases of sexual assault collected among government contracted employees? If so, how is this data collected and where is that data published?

Victims of crime perpetrated by employees of taxpayer funded government contracts in Iraq deserve the same standard of treatment they have a right to at home. We hope the State Department is working to prevent crime and protect victims. Thank you for your consideration. Because of the urgent nature of this matter, we request a response by February XX, 2008.

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Louise M. Slaughter
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